Science of Reading: WRITING, The Next Chapter

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"There is no reading without writing,
And no purpose for writing
without reading."

~Steve Graham

SCIENCE OF READING PRINCIPLES
(With Implications for Writing)

1 Science-based reading instruction is a matter of equity and supports all children.

2 Learning to read and write is not natural and must be taught systematically, explicitly, and cumulatively.

3 Proficient reading requires word recognition and language comprehension, while proficient writing requires transcription and composition skills.

4 Reading and writing are mutually-reinforcing processes that should be taught through integrated instruction.

5 Background knowledge and vocabulary are critical to both reading comprehension and writing composition.

6 Literacy relies on language as its primary system: Instruction must develop both oral and written language.

7 Reading comprehension is a series of cognitive processes that are employed during and after reading.

8 Universal screening and progress monitoring are critical to gather the data needed to target instruction and measure effectiveness.

9 Literacy instruction in any language must be based on that language's unique features.

10 Honoring the home language, culture, and community experiences of all students supports positive, long-term outcomes.

Sample SBA tasks that require both reading and writing competence:
What should you teach to support <u>writing</u>? What should you teach to support <u>reading</u>?

- Revising texts by choosing better words (sr)
- Select a group of sentences that would follow a passage logically (sr)
- Rewrite a paragraph by reorganizing it and adding details (cr)
- Explain the organization of a [poem] and how the organization supports understanding (cr)
- Revising texts by (sr)
- Explaining figurative language—the device used and *why* the author used it (cr)
- Rewrite a story by adding dialogue, descriptive details, and a conclusion without changing the events or characters (cr)
- Full writes: argument/opinion, explanatory, narrative

What gets in the way of writing instruction in the classroom? What would you add to this list?

- Teachers have not been taught a lot about writing or writing instruction, and many do not consider themselves good writers.
- For students who struggle with literacy, reading is hard enough; writing is even harder.
- Teachers spend so much time teaching reading that there is little time left for the teaching of writing.
- Too many teachers still think that time to write and providing writing prompts is *teaching* writing.
- Sometimes reading and writing are taught by different teachers.
- CT has eliminated the "full write" from SBA assessments. Reality: What gets tested, gets taught.

What is the Effect Size?
(For Conference Use)

1. **Writing Process:** Students are taught to use a multi-step writing process, including planning, drafting, revising, and editing. They make use of this process in writing assignments.
   Effect Size: _____

2. **Collaboration:** Students work collaboratively on their writing in pairs or groups at various stages of the writing process: planning, drafting, revising, editing.
   Effect Size: _____

3. **Feedback**: Students receive regular and timely performance feedback about the quality of a writing product from adults, peers, or through self-administered ratings (e.g., using rubrics).
   Effect Size: _____

4. **Goal setting:** At various points in the writing process (planning, drafting, writing, revising), students are encouraged to form specific goals; they later report out (to the teacher or a peer) whether they have actually accomplished those goals.
   Effect Size: _____

5. **Keyboarding:** Students become fluent in keyboarding and have regular access to word-processing devices when writing.
   Effect Size: _____

6. **Pre-writing:** Students engage in pre-writing activities: Before beginning a writing assignment, students take part in tasks to plan what they will write. This might include drawing pictures relevant to the topic; writing out a writing plan; reading articles linked to the writing topic, etc.
   Effect Size: _____

7. **More writing:** Students have more writing included in their daily instruction (i.e. journaling, writing written responses to questions, writing to prompts)
   Effect Size: _____

8. **Writing models:** Students study writing models of the kinds of writing they will be asked to produce so they can in turn incorporate similar elements of structure and craft into their writing pieces.
   Effect Size: _____

9. **Text structure:** Students are taught basic text structures (narrative, informative, opinion) along with genres within those structures (like fables, biography, editorials)
   Effect Size: _____

10. **Sentence construction skills:** Students are taught sentence types, sentence building, and sentence modeling.
    Effect Size: _____

11. **Writing strategies:** Students are taught techniques that "real writers" use such as strong verbs and other crafts, do's and don'ts to maximize writing effectiveness, etc
    Effect Size: _____

12. **Writing mechanics (including grammar) and spelling:** Students receive explicit instruction in spelling and writing mechanics (including grammar).
    Effect Size: _____

What is the Effect Size?
(For Professional Development)

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WHAT TO LOOK FOR IN CLASSROOM WRITING INSTRUCTION

What to Look For Based on Effect Size

1. Teachers teach the writing process explicitly. (teach different writing structures and the components of the writing process: Planning, drafting, revising, editing)

2. Teachers provide some opportunities for student collaboration when students engage in the writing process (probably revising and editing and maybe prewriting; drafting is more of an individual task)

3. Teachers provide timely and specific feedback (one or two points); possibly a *glow* and a *grow*. Not "add details," but "try adding some dialogue here to make your character come alive."

4. Teachers model setting writing goals and ask students to set daily writing goals for themselves: "By the end of class today I will have __."

5. Teachers develop students' skills in transcription including handwriting and keyboarding so they can write fluently.

6. Teachers provide some (but not excessive) opportunities for prewriting so students can specify a framework for their writing without spending too much time or creativity on this part of the writing process.

7. Teachers incorporate more time for writing within their school day, but offer focused instruction, not just writing prompts or time for "free writing."

8. Teachers use writing models to improve students' writing by helping them deconstruct texts based on structure and craft.

9. Teachers teach essential text structures: explanatory/informative, narrative, and opinion/argument, as well as different genres such as biography, fables, and personal narrative.

10. Teachers teach sentence construction: types of sentences, sentence building, and sentence combining. (90% of writing is spent at the sentence level.

11. Teachers teach writing strategies, both author's crafts and "tricks of the trade" to use writing time most productively

12. Teachers teach writing mechanics, spelling and grammar in part for its impact on equity.

13. Teachers teach students to summarize: Before students can write analytically or creatively, they need to demonstrate understanding of what they've read; summarizing provides this verification.

14. Teachers connect reading and writing by having students write about their reading, and read texts similar in craft or structure to those they will write.

Professional Development Activity

WHAT TO LOOK FOR IN CLASSROOM WRITING INSTRUCTION:
What the Research Says

1. Teachers teach the writing process explicitly.
   - What would explicit instruction of writing look like?

2. Teachers provide some opportunities for student collaboration when students engage in the writing process.
   - In what components of the writing process would collaboration be most effective?

3. Teachers provide timely and specific feedback.
   - What kind of specific feedback is the most helpful?

4. Teachers model setting writing goals and ask students to set daily writing goals for themselves.
   - What are some examples of good daily writing goals?

5. Teachers develop students' skills in transcription.
   - What kinds of transcription skills do students need?

6. Teachers provide some (but not excessive) opportunities for pre-writing.
   - What kins of prewriting activities are effective?

7. More writing
   - What is the benefit of including more writing in the school day?

8. Teachers use writing models to improve students' writing
   - How can teachers use writing models effectively?

9. Teachers teach text structures.
   - What structures and genres do students need to understand?

10. Teachers teach sentence construction skills.
    - What sentence construction skills are important?

11. Teachers teach writing strategies.
    - What useful writing strategies can we teach students?

12. Teachers teach writing mechanics (including grammar) and spelling.
    - Why teach mechanics and spelling despite its low effect size?

13. Teachers teach students to summarize.
    - Why is summarizing so important?

14. Teachers connect reading and writing.
    - What teacher knowledge is essential to help students connect reading and writing?

What to Look For Based on Standards-based Expectations

- **Teachers require different proportions of different kinds of writing** at their grade level
  - In Elementary School, 30% of student writing should be to argue, 35% should be to explain/inform, and 35% should be narrative.
  - In Middle School, 35% of student writing should be to write arguments, 35% should be to explain/inform, and 30% should be narrative.
  - In High School, 40% of student writing should be to write arguments, 40% should be to explain/inform, and 20% should be narrative.

- **Teachers understand writing benchmarks at their grade level and hold students accountable to these expectations.**
  For example: For Informative/Explanatory writing K-12:
  - **K:** Name a topic and supply information
  - **1:** Name a topic, supply facts, closure
  - **2:** Introduce, facts, concluding statement
  - **3:** Above plus group related information, develop topic with details, Use linking words, concluding statement or section
  - **4:** Above plus paragraphs, headings, quotations, domain specific vocabulary, concluding statement that provides coherence
  - **5:** Above plus general observation to introduce topic, logical grouping,
  - **6:** Above plus introduce topic strategically, include graphics, use a formal style, concluding statement that follows from the information presented
  - **7:** Above plus introduce by previewing what will follow,
  - **8:** Above plus introduction that includes broad categories, carefully selected facts
  - **9-10:** Above plus objective tone; conclusion should consider implications or significance
  - **11-12:** Organize topic so each new element builds on what precedes it; language should include techniques such as metaphor, simile, analogy; conclusion should consider implications or significance

Next Steps for Districts in Advancing Skilled Writing

- Share with teachers the significance of the reading/writing connection

- Review examples of standards-based assessment tasks and ask teachers what they think they would need to do to get students to succeed at these tasks.

- Ask teachers to share what *they* think gets in the way of good writing instruction. (Be honest). Share with them some of the thoughts we've mentioned today.)

- Share the research about writing instruction strategies that work: Effect size and more—including a hands-on Professional Development Activity

- Review CCSS Writing expectations by grade level: Do teachers know the benchmarks to which students at their grade level are accountable?

- Move from WHAT to do to HOW to do it: Ask teachers to identify what exemplary writing instruction will look like in the classroom: What will the teacher do? What will students do? Set specific goals based on the research and your district's data about students' writing performance